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ABSTRACT

Four short papers on pluralistic aspects of education in the United States are presented along with a brief response by a professor of philosophy and education, and the minutes of a discussion among panel participants. Topics presented include: the bilingual education program in Hartford, Connecticut; the textbook controversy in West Virginia; the mission of public higher education; and the mission of church related higher education. The perspectives offered by the various authors range from the theological to the secular. Concepts of pluralism and theology are addressed in the general discussion. A paper on the role of religion in America's future is also included. In the paper a range of social, cultural and religious trends are discussed. Strategies for coping with social, economic and structural problems are outlined. Emphasis is placed upon the important role of the church in humanizing the current system. (GC)

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EDUCATION IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY: FOUR PERSPECTIVES

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Response by Philip H. Phenix, Professor of Philosophy and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

RELIGION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA

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PRESENTATIONS MADE TO THE
PROGRAM COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT
MAY 29-30, 1975

This panel presentation and address were given at the meeting of the Program Committee for Education in the Society of the National Council of Churches at Seabury House in Greenwich, Connecticut, May 29-30, 1975.

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The Bilingual Education Program in Hartford

Joseph Prewitt, Vice-Principal,
Bulkeley High School,
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I am the product of the pluralistic society. My grandmother is of African descent. My grandfather is a Spaniard. My American grandfather comes from somewhere in Europe, and my American grandmother is an Indian (Native American). I would like to qualify the fact that I have very limited experience here in the U.S. although I could talk very well about the piece of land where I come from. I was asked to speak about the culture of Puerto Rico, about bilingual programs in Hartford and about the bilingual situation. I cannot do all three, so I will limit myself to some aspects of bilingual education and how they are affecting the Hartford School System. Just drop it at that for the ten minutes and then if anyone has any reactions, I will be glad to entertain any questions that might arise.

Most recently, the Chamber of Commerce of Hartford has been trying to solve the problem that the city of Hartford is having with its Spanish-speaking citizens, specifically the Puerto Ricans. Over thirty per cent of the inner city population is Puerto Rican, with a large black community. It was thought that it would be proper to teach English to the people who were coming to work in the fields of the Connecticut Valley. A project of teaching English as a second language began in the Hartford Public School System about fifteen years ago, but it did not quite function. The educators missed the point when they did not plan for commuters, instead of migrants who were going to come and settle down here. Let me say what I mean by commuters. My wife's uncle has been this year back and forth with his family four times. He comes here, puts his kid in one school, takes him back and puts him in another school in Puerto Rico, comes here and moves into another section of town, so P. Rodriguez has been in effect a recent arrival for four different times in one year.

The other thing the educators failed to deal with was the difference in school systems. Puerto Rico has a very diversified school system, although it is centralized. We have year-round high schools. I have two experiences which I would like to relate. One of them is about a young girl who went from our school system in Puerto Rico and was in the school program there. She had just completed ninth and tenth grades, but since they take five credits for every quinmester, she had finished fifty credits in all the subject matters. When she came here she was immediately graduated from high school because she was over-qualified.

The second story is that of a young man who came over here and wanted to go early this year into high school. He was a tenth grader and he went through our program into the Hartford Public High School. He was told

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that he would have to go into ESL (English as a Second Language) because his knowledge of the English language was limited. He asked the ESL teacher, "How long will I have to be here in order to go into the regular classes?" The teacher told him that it would be at least one semester, or maybe the whole year. I think the guy played his young Puerto Rican act. He went over to Hartford Community College, conned someone there, and got in. He came back to us at the end of the semester, had accrued thirty-five credits at Greater Hartford Community College and asked us if he could be graduated from high school. I went to my superiors and asked them if he could graduate from high school, but he could not graduate from our school system because he had not proven that he can do high school work in a Hartford public high school. So that's one type of problem; the commuter.

Let's talk about the neo-Ricans, or whatever you want to call them. Those are the kids whose parents have decided to make a life here in the U.S. We have been trying to set up programs for these children; we have noticed that ESL has not been functional. We have tried to establish a bilingual program, a program where the kid can learn how to speak English, a place where the child is able to speak school English, and will be able to maintain his or her Spanish language. Another thing, we encourage our children to speak Spanish at home at all times. We don't say that you have to speak English because that's the world out there, and they speak English. Maybe absent-mindedness, or maybe pride has forced us into isolation, so we established a testing program to see which kids could go into the regular mainstream English courses because they were English dominant, and we tried to establish which kids were Spanish dominant so we could give them more attention in English. One of the categories that came out of the computer print-out was the kids who were a-lingual. They did not master the English language, the school language that comes out in a copy of the Peabody or the IPBA. But they did not master the Spanish that would come in the Inter-American reading test. So they had no language. They could speak rice and beans talk from out in the street. I will go back to these a-lingual kids in a while.

What we have in Hartford is an elementary school program which deals with children from pre-K all the way to fifth grade; it's a Title VII Pilot Project. It's called Esquelita, the little school, and several good things are happening there. One of the things is that parents are involving themselves in the process of education of their child. It is a myth to think, as I have been asked, what's a bilingual program, is it all in Spanish? We test kids to find what their level of English dominance is. If they speak English fairly well, they will begin to be reinforced in the English language. But their Spanish language is maintained, and more importantly, they learn to read, pronounce and punctuate correctly their native language. We want them to be cognizant of both languages. When a child is more English dominant he will receive most of his courses in English. He will receive maintenance in his Spanish

language. If the child is Spanish dominant, vice-versa. We also have a lot of Anglo kids coming into our schools into the bilingual program. It's a very nice type of experience, a kind of cultural sympathy. You invite a child into your house for a hamburger and a taste of all this good cultural food. That's important. But more important than that is the process of interaction of one child with another. And I think this emphasis is being taken in the elementary grades. In the secondary grades, we have pretty much the same setup. We have found out several things since the inception of the bilingual program in Hartford, which happened about four years ago. One, that most of the Puerto Ricans who have stayed around the Hartford area, the inner-city, come from sixteen island towns, the tobacco towns of the island. So we have tried to get people to match teachers who are bilingual and who can serve as a model to come and teach those children in their language or in English. In one of our middle schools where this experiment has succeeded, we're at the point where a kid can select what language he's going to take a particular course in. He can decide to take Social Studies in English and Science in Spanish, whatever language he feels most comfortable with.

In another experiment which we have been doing at the high school level, we have been finding these a-lingual children, kids who are sixteen years old and who have not been able to learn either English or Spanish to read. They have not been able to master those skills. Why? One of the things has been that they have been in special classes for the last six years, so we cannot give these minority kids, these poor Puerto Rican kids, any homework. They've been kept in a Latin situation and their growth has been hampered. So we have seventeen year-old kids who are unable to read or write or even to verbalize well in English or Spanish. At the same time that we are teaching them, in a process which I would dare call a di-cognitive process, we are thinking of children who are going to enter into the world of work within a year. Now, what do we do? Do we grade, or do we want to help those kids to be able to function in the bigger society? We have started a process which we call the Human Development Lab. It's actually a group dynamics type of setting, where some kids get together with others who have similar problems, who are not EMRLD's (Educable Mentally Retarded; Learning Disability) socially maladjusted or something. They're good kids, they just haven't been able to advance at the pace that they should. Right now at our group at the high school, we have fourteen different ethnic groups working together. Now in May, today, they're out in New York on their last field trip for the year and they're sort of sorry that this has to break up. A very good process of inter-relationship has been created.

One more thing is that the type of curriculum which we have created is not a written curriculum. It is not standard, transitional English or bilingual Social Studies. We have tried to create a living curriculum for those kids. If we should study the history of the U.S., why not use the outside resources that we have outside of the four walls? We have found that to work. Kids who would be very hyper in a study hall went to the State Legislature in Hartford and sat very quietly and even after that, they asked the representatives a lot of questions about legislature. Now how do you explain that? Those kids are really bad kids? No. The question that I must raise with myself and that I would ask all of you is what have we been doing as adults to the educational system of the U.S.? What are we willing to do to provide quality, equal and humane education for all of us Americans and how are we going to go about it? And in terms of religion, I think that churches have had a large influence in the development of the peoples of the world and I think that churches have a large responsibility in projecting themselves into the communities, the so-called culturally disadvantaged communities.

The Text-Book Controversy in West Virginia

Valerie B. Russell, Assistant to the
President, The United Church of Christ

I've been asked to tell you a little about my experience on the National Education Association's panel in West Virginia, as I guess they highlight some of the problems that we're going to have to explore in the next couple of days.

Before I do that I'd like to say a few words of preface. I guess it's important at some point to define pluralism. When I talk about pluralism, what I talk about is first of all an assumption that the constitutional dream of all men being created equal has not been lived out, and some people therefore are created a little more equal than others, and that what we're having in terms of a struggle for diversity at the present time is almost a reverse of what was happening in the early sixties. When I went for my Woodrow Wilson exam in the sixties, they asked me what I thought was the most prominent social problem of our time in terms of social theory. And I said I thought the problem was one of anomie and normlessness. With countercultures springing up all around, institutions were in a state of great disarray.

But I think what's happening now is that we no longer have a situation of anomie, but basically a conflict of norms and that people in their diversity, out of their backgrounds in their institutions, have dug in their heels, and that those norms are basically in conflict with each other and at the same time, any sense of a common core of belief has dissolved in America. It isn't that our differences are not apparent to us; it's that we are digging into our differences and that which was once the myth of a common ideal or a common dream has all but dissolved. This leaves us very little common ground. Given that context, when I talk about pluralism I talk about what we can claim in common which will help us to re-establish some common ground, number one; and secondly, how we can empower every group of people, every race, every sex, every whatever, to somehow claim their own roots, their own identity and their own right to some kind of control of the decision making which effects their lives.

Pluralism is a very difficult thing to believe in, if you come out of a context of advocacy, which I think most of us do, of one sort or another. And the thing that had me really up-tight when I was asked to go into West Virginia, was that automatically I assumed that these parents who were against the bi-racial textbooks and so forth were on the wrong side and that I was going down there to advocate freedom of access to information.

I knew in a way that I had to be a little more open than that. If you're going to be really tuned in to understanding the pluralistic voices, somehow you have to learn how to understand where you stand but somehow also to be really open to those other voices and hear where those other roots are coming from. One of my friends, Dorothy Height, who has taught me a lot of things, said to me, "Valerie, the only job for a Christian today is to be totally and radically open, to listen to every human being who comes before you on a panel like that. And then in order to go into that situation you have to strip your mind bare of all your preconceptions, really concentrate all your energies on listening and then where you stand from will emerge". I went to West Virginia with that as my personal agenda and it was difficult.

We heard from about thirty witnesses, morning, noon and night, who all had stories to tell, some of which were very similar and many of which were radically different.

Let me paint a picture of this for you in terms of the situation. The West Virginia community we're talking about is basically divided into people who live in the country called the Hollers (the people who live in the Hollows) and the folk who live in the city. The people who live in the city represent the big corporations which have moved into that community and who have used the labor of the people who live in the country. So that, prior to the textbook situation, there is a history of exploitation and tension between the two groups. There is diverse cultural understanding, not only in terms of religion, or religious ideas, the people in the Hollers representing the more fundamentalistic religious tradition, but there's also a great difference in educational understanding. One of the things that parents kept saying to us is that the style of education has changed so much that we can't understand what they're teaching our children. And when they would go to talk to these teachers, the teachers had no way of communicating to these parents what in essence they were trying to teach them. So that, we found that the communication system, the traditional communication system, had totally broken down.

Now, the mediating body should have been the Board of Education, but unfortunately, we felt that they were very much a part of the problem. In some ways they were the victim of the situation. The people who are the problem are often the victims, because they had inherited a situation which had a long history, and the textbook controversy had flared before over sex education issues. But the Board of Education in adopting new cultural and multi-racial textbooks had not, for example, attempted to educate the parents about these books. They had put them on view in the libraries and said if you want to look at them you can go to the libraries. Although that school county covers

over 900 square miles, they had never attempted to move out of Charleston for one of their meetings, so there was a feeling of inaccessibility to the people who had the decision-making control.

And on the other hand the Board of Education had on its side a certain amount of good intention. They knew that we no longer live in a Dick and Jane Society and that it's important to educate all the people about what's happening in terms of a pluralistic concept. But they didn't know how to do that or how to communicate the intention of that. Another thing that we found was that the teachers did not have a great deal of training and understanding of the various constituencies that they were teaching. This became clear when we were addressed by groups of students from city schools and students from the country schools. The degree and the difference of educational quality was amazing and one wonders how much that has to do some times with expectations, not only of parents, but of teachers. The teachers themselves agreed that it was very difficult for them to communicate to many of the parents, because they didn't understand their roots and their culture. We have to understand also that a lot of the digging-in of tradition was going on at this point.

The people who are in the country are very afraid of urban problems. They're afraid, as one of them said to us, that "New York is going to move down here". And they didn't want riots in their streets, and they thought that if you taught Eldridge Cleaver to kids there would be riots in the streets. They thought if you taught that Thomas Jefferson had slaves, that that was bastardizing American history, because after all that's what had made people proud of America, that we had a great president, Thomas Jefferson. They didn't like disputing the good parts of history. They felt that all of the new literature was negative, and much of it was; that it was negative and that it didn't have much hope in it. And this is what gave them, it seems to me, an opportunity to go back and cling to the religious arguments because a lot of these people are inarticulate in explaining educational conflict but are much more articulate in trying to talk about religious conflict.

A third group in the mix was the liberal group, who had organized around the issue of free education. What they did was very important, because unless some group of parents had stood up and said, yes, we want interracial, intercultural textbooks, they probably would have lost the whole ball-game. But the problem was that as we listened to the people from this community talk, they often talked about the people from the Hollers as objects. For example, one of the ministers sat there, (the two communities were on each side of the room), and said these people are suffering from anomie which, of course,

to those people sounded like a disease. And secondly, it is not, I believe, fundamentally true. I believe they knew very well where they were coming from. I think they were suffering from the traumas of change and cultural shock, and from trying to find access into a system for self-determination.

Well, you can understand that as my sympathies grew for the Hollers people, I got more scared than ever, and it is very interesting that the other black woman on the panel, who was chairing the panel, and I suddenly began to realize that though these issues were couched in religious terms, and in many cases in educational terms, and even when teachers were talking about teacher rights and the whole question of community control and so forth, that we were really talking about an issue of power and empowerment, no matter what kind of rhetoric we wanted to put on it and how we began to filter it down. And that suddenly our advocacy began to change, because we were no longer advocating toward an issue, but toward a certain situation and toward two people who were really caught in the conflict of pluralism; to try to see how either side could be empowered, but where justice could somehow be served. That's the third element in there, you don't throw away all your value systems but how do you generate some sense of justice in the situation for both sides?

We did find that the situation was being exploited by Birchers. They were putting in thousands of dollars and sending organizers and literature into communities. I, being a representative of the National Council of Churches, was held in great disdain, because the couple of things they knew about us were: first of all, that we advocated One World in some argument which they had been told was Communistic and that we had supported Madalyn Murray O'Hair in the Supreme Court, and they felt this was basically anti-religious. And so they thought the NCC was basically anti-religious. Trying to win the trust of these people, because they thought we were coming in to ramrod an ideal down their throats, was quite a difficult task. But I think that the effort of doing it was one of the clues to what has to begin to happen, because it created a kind of neutral ground where both sides had to listen to each other, and the shouting was kept to a relative minimum. Hopefully, in the report which we have prepared, enough of both sides was legitimated and some other good things were said, that it will be helpful in this situation.

In general, the solution that we recommended was that the Board of Education had to begin to do dialogues with parents, had to do much more community education about the focuses, the goals, the purposes of education and a certain amount of teacher education in terms of

multi-cultural education. And that somehow, we did not need to force everybody into a monolith; that if we're going to begin to expand people's horizons, perhaps there were different approaches and different levels we can use, as levels of consciousness develop. What had happened was that the Board had taken an extreme way of doing this. But the pattern that is beginning to work now, I think, is to develop diversity of ways of raising consciousness, so that everyone isn't forced to read Malcolm X; they can start with something else. We must begin to build levels of consciousness, for the revolution doesn't happen overnight, we as educators need to know that. At the same time, hold fast to the conviction that people cannot stay where they were and that the past is gone and that we are a people who have changed.

What are some fundamental learnings from this experience? First of all, the thought that class disputes are based on economics really broke down here. This is the first time I've seen that class distinction in America was not based on economics. Some of those people in the Hollers had more money than people in the cities. They are very well paid laborers. It was their cultural background and another kind of historical root which cut them off from the mainstream. Which says, again, that unless one can conform to the norms of the monolith, one is not accepted in society. Economics is not basically the determinant for equality. Secondly, that the formal systems for communication in the educational system are dysfunctional. Because of that, and because the traditions are in conflict and are digging in their heels, the school systems of this age are going to be the battleground for racial and cultural clashes for the next ten or fifteen years. If it happens anyplace, it's going to be within the schools. It's kind of ironic, as our hearing officer said, that after two hundred years, we're just now starting to try to teach pluralism, and that schools have been undemocratic institutions that have tried to produce democratic people. Therefore, what we're really in conflict with is a whole theory of education that's got to be thrown out the window. If you want to create democratic people, you can't use undemocratic means. Nobody knows what the new thing is that we're trying to create which is more democratic.

Another thing we learned is that here was basically a conflict of two values and two philosophies of education. Is education a transmitter of culture, of a world as it ought to be and which includes a kind of basic education, maintenance, the three R's, etc. or is education to help one make choices and to create alternatives? Finally, when people find themselves without power and when they function in non-verbal styles, violence is inevitable. If we think that the school systems are going to be the battle grounds for working out this kind of pluralism,

I believe we have got to deal with the fact, unfortunately, that violence will be inevitable in the struggle. Where the church fits into this, it seems to me, is to provide somehow the mediating ground and the breathing space. The one person who was respected by both sides in that situation was the Methodist bishop who had opened his house and tried to provide some point of negotiation. But we ourselves, as persons who relate to the church, are going to have to get a lot more grounded in our ability to deal with conflict and in our ability to listen, together with an ability to be advocates before we can even help that happen. and I don't know if we know how to do that.

The Mission of Public Higher Education

John D. Maguire, President,
State University of New York,
College at Old Westbury

I want to take the position that pluralism is not just an accident of the American experience, but expresses a very profound truth about the access to reality itself. My text is an epigram of the ancient Symmachus, who said "There cannot be one way only to the heart of so great a mystery." Granted, in that context he was talking about ideology and in our context we're talking about education. I would paraphrase him to say that there cannot be access for only one group to the mystery of education nor can there be only one method toward it.

Rather than describe my experience in a kind of pressure-cooker educational environment, I want to reflect with you about some issues that have become reasonably clear for me out of that experience, which represents the perspective of public higher education. I think that pluralism in American public higher education results from implementing the unassailable proposition that all citizens should be able to use their colleges; that public colleges are like public libraries; that people of all ages and in all stages should be able to be associated with an institution of higher learning in whatever ways and for however long their needs and desires require. Just as you can go into the public library and stay all day or several days running, or only be there for ten minutes, just so it seems to me that public colleges must provide that sort of resource availability for all citizens of all ages and be as accessible to them. In other words, pluralism is the consequence of the position that there should be universal access to public higher education; that a society cannot tax all of its citizens and then frustrate the aspirations of some by limiting or denying them opportunity.

I shan't try to fashion, even if I could, a theological basis for my position; rather, I root my position in the concept of what it means to be a citizen, and in the right of citizenship. So, in addition then to the eighteen to twenty-two-year-old, mostly white, conventionally speaking, well-prepared youngsters, the public college that takes its universal access commission seriously, finds itself also enrolling increasing numbers of minority group citizens of all ages, black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American, middle-aged males seeking a degree change, a career change, young marrieds seeking to recoup missed educational opportunity, older adults seeking enrichment, physically handicapped persons, senior citizens, early retireds thinking of new horizons, students in training programs, I'm thinking of nurses and

technicians, high school seniors who want to get a head start on college, low income persons, college dropouts, job bound persons, rurally and physically isolated persons, persons seeking personal enrichment but not interested in the credit itself.

In other words, pluralism must not be limited in our thinking either to ideology or to race or culture or class, and in this most obviously practical sense that I've tried to sketch for you, it is a very wide ranging concept, and an even more important and wide ranging reality. The pluralism I've just sketched is what we experience in a place like mine every day.

To be sure, this catalogue that I've just given you is preeminently American; that is, it reflects the pluralism that is developing in American institutions of higher learning. But the challenge of pluralism, I think, must ultimately be seen as a world-wide phenomenon. And more and more, as I think about the issues, the real issues, I'm driven to an international and world context for my thinking.

So I say that pluralism is a reality and it is to be affirmed and celebrated. Nevertheless, it poses certain challenges and problems. Without even attempting to resolve them, I want to identify four of them that arise in the context of American public higher education.

The first is this; that pluralism, of the kind that I've described, challenges us to identify what, in and among our differences, we can still affirm together, if anything, or hold or exercise in common. The advent of so many different peoples, with so many different needs and aspirations, only amplifies the already existing tendencies in colleges and universities toward mismatched expectations, especially between the students and the faculty, or between the faculty and the administration. For a long time, for three decades at least, we have had frighteningly accelerated tendencies toward fragmentation, isolation and balkanisation in institutions. Pluralism, the advent of so many kinds of people, at so many ages and stages in their lives, only accelerates and exacerbates that challenge and raises the question, "What could so many people there at one place, possibly have in common?" The challenge is as great today as when, in 1947, reacting to World War II, the holocaust and our confrontation with Naziism the Truman Commission declared: "The complexity of modern society requires a great variety of talents and many kinds of competence for its successful functioning. Yet without some commonality of purpose, values and experience we shall not achieve the reconciliation of differing opinions and interest that is the lifeblood of democracy". That's problem number one, it seems to me,

that the reality of pluralism poses us. If there are that many different kinds of people and interests in higher education, what in the world, literally, do we hold in common, and how can that commonality of experience and value and purpose be found?

The second challenge pluralism poses in the context of public higher education is to reaffirm our commitment to excellence, even when, having realized the class and culture-bound character of our previous understandings of it, the very concept of excellence is itself undergoing profound redefinition. The whole issue about standards in the City University of New York, when open admissions came, is very instructive. People assumed that they knew a priori what the good was and then came all those black folk and Puerto Ricans "lowering" those standards! Well, once one realized that there were cultural conceptions of very different kinds converging on a single spot, then one realized in the next step, that a kind of pluralistic, re-defined multi-cultural and multi-racial understanding of excellence had to be fashioned, which wasn't just the throwing in of the towel by everyone in a search for the lowest common denominator. That's really the question: what is excellence? Can you give a non-class or non-culture-bound concept of excellence? Because, in fact, if the next stage is the abandonment of a commitment to quality, however parochially it is initially conceived, then you have done a disservice to the very people who have now gained access to the institution. That hightlights a dialectic to which I can only allude, the dialectic between inner and outer. That is to say: a lot of growth in understanding, breaking through, redefining has got to occur on campuses, but it is part, obviously, of a wider society, of a wider social set of issues. You cannot expect the colleges and universities to make these great breakthroughs when the breakdowns are occurring all around them in the wider society. That is the second challenge, then, a redefinition of excellence at the same time one is making a recommitment to it.

The third problem that I see is that within the university itself pluralism challenges us to reconceive and refashion both the content and the method of a number of scholarly disciplines in light of the changed consciousness resulting from the presence of new groups in the university. We were aware twelve or fifteen years ago of the whole rewriting of American history that began in light of the burgeoning awareness of black experience. Right now, it is clearly the presence of women in the university that is having a profound impact on the reshaping of the disciplines. I will give you three examples, from anthropology, economics and history. In anthropology: acknowledgement was given at the last meeting of the Anthropological Society of a researcher who had been in the field thirty-five years. She

had gone into a number of societies that she only realized later were matriarchal in character and interviewed all the men there and published her scholarly findings about the perceptions of the natives regarding their society. It suddenly dawned on her later that, as a woman, maybe she could have talked to the other women in the society to which she went.

In economics: for the last seventeen years the United Nations has published annually reports regarding power output in agricultural societies. The unit of measure has not been just "manpower per hectare," meaning by it "person-power." It literally is a measure of work the men in that society do on the land. But they have discovered now that twenty-one of the societies for whom they have been keeping records for these seventeen years, using the rubric "manpower per hectare," actually have over half of the agricultural work done by the women! Therefore, the measures of economic reality and economic productivity are totally out the window. And that whole method of measures is now having to be changed under the impact of changed consciousness, resulting from the awareness of a whole group in the society, namely; women.

Similarly, in history: it seems to me that we now know more vividly than we have ever known before that the history we all studied and that many of us now teach, is a history of elites, whereas real history is the history of the unheard. And so the whole method of historiography is now having to undergo profound change as we go back to birth records in County Cork or county wherever, using demographic tables and many other kinds of approaches to the study of history that we never did as long as we studied the written artifacts left us by cultural elites. My point is that pluralism within institutions of higher learning is actually forcing a refashioning of the content and methods of the scholarly disciplines themselves.

Finally, pluralism challenges us who are administrators to new skills in conflict management and to ever closer approximations of equity. If institutions are open to all, and are really about all, then only a few persons from a particular social or economic class or gender or racial or cultural group, cannot continue alone to shape the institutions that influence and control the lives of all. The web of issues here was innocently called " the governance issue" on campuses a little while back, the issue then being simply the role of student power. Now with unionism we are having a reassertion of faculty power. Underneath all that is a real challenge, if you believe that institutions are for and about all, and more and more all are coming. Some mechanism has got to be found by which all shape the character of that institution, without lapsing into the silly things we did when we intoned "participatory democracy."

In the Mississippi project of 1964, when typewriters were so badly needed, I remember being proud of myself for getting the Remington Rand Company to give us twenty of them and then going into a voter registration headquarters in Greenwood one day and asking the young man, "Can I borrow the typewriter?" He replied "Don't ask me." "Well, who to ask?" "Ask the people of Mississippi!" "Well, how can I ask the people of Mississippi if I can just use the typewriter today?" "Well, I wouldn't feel free with your using it, you know, because it's really the people's machine." Somewhere between paralyzing participatory democracy and autocratic individualism we have got to find a way, we have got to find new patterns of governance and management of public institutions.

So, I think that a sense of "we" has to be established and sustained within the university. But this will be impossible unless a similar movement is occurring within the wider society.

I said that I thought pluralism was rooted in citizenship, and this is my concluding word: that a start toward this "we sense" might begin if we pursue the logic of the argument of access that has pushed toward such rich pluralism already, that roots in access and the rights of citizenship. If all citizens ought to have access to the colleges their tax money supports, why? And to what end? The answer has to be to become better citizens. Could we begin at least by agreeing that the purpose of a public college education is what I call "civic"? The only way we will ever get groups together is to minimally agree to a common purpose and I think that since we got there by the exercise of our rights as citizens, we might find that minimal common purpose in an agreement that the fundamental purpose of our being there is to enhance our citizenship. Ultimately public education is civic. That would mark a start toward some commonality of purpose and value and would lead toward a kind of education recently described by the distinguished black scholar, Vincent Harding. He writes: "Public higher education today has to be for creative dissent, for the disciplined remaking and transformation of the public, the polis, the body politic, America as we know it. "I speak," he continues, "of an education which will release and encourage ferment, which will engender dissatisfaction with what is and develop painfully honed visions of the possibilities which humans may yet create for the good of their society. I speak of an education which will urge people to rethink themselves and everything else around them, an education which will allow them no false peace, which will demand that they make real, hard decisions about their lives and their commitments, an education which is not simply for the amplification of the perspectives, prejudices and commitments which they brought with them to the college, but one that requires a fundamental consideration of all their basic commitments."

The Mission of Church-Related Higher Education

F. Thomas Trotter, General Secretary,
Board of Higher Education and Ministry,
The United Methodist Church

We have inherited in the church higher education systems in America an enormous system of institutions and we have lost our way. We are elitist. We moved west with the westward movement, passing up all the Indian nations on the way. I just came back this morning from Alaska, where I am fighting to save a private establishment in which my denomination has invested many millions of dollars and the local trustees want to give it to the state, which in the environment there is not concerned about Native American higher education. How do you bend an institution which has put millions of dollars into an institution when you've run into difficulties? You must solve the problem by turning it over to the regents of the state university. My biggest problem as a bureaucrat is trying to reverse that trend, not knowing what I am going to do with these institutions. But the assets ought to be conserved, redesigned and refocused around the church's new missional tasks. I told my board recently that I did not want to see another brass plaque in the women's gym that says: this university used to belong to the United Church of Christ, or to the United Methodist Church. That's been the way we have disposed of institutions. It has been very careless and I think terribly frivolous.

I want to make some observations about this as it is related to pluralism. Pluralism is a problem for the independent church-related institutions of higher education because they have inadequately addressed the problems of pluralism. By and large these have been elitist institutions. On the other hand, they have instructed higher education in significant ways, and still have the capacity to do that. They are small enough, they are flexible enough, they do not have all the peril that accompanies the state legislative procedure. Their mission ought to be innovative and experimental. They ought to be harbingers of new educational styles and new educational communities.

My first observation is that it is not self evident that the church public, or even the public-at-large, really cares for higher education. We have assumed in our culture that it is taken for granted. It may be taken for granted in the circles in which we grew up, but it is really not taken for granted in the statehouse, as I have discovered very painfully. I am observing a lot of movement these days, back and forth between the public and private sectors as career educationalists begin to sense that the rush

toward public education in the fifties and sixties may not have been the last movement in education. And just at the time when there are indications that the dual system in the U.S. still has a role to play in the clarification of some of the things that the panelists have said, the bureaucratic machine of the church is throwing off institutions. That is a grave problem from my point of view.

The second thing is that the church agencies and many of those involved with those agencies have to decide what our missional tasks in higher education are in the last decades of this century that are comparable to the tasks we understood as ours in the nineteenth century. I am amazed at the cultural history and the weight of tradition and momentum in our democratic society that came out of those institutions. For example, I attended an affair recently at Illinois Wesleyan. It is a fine school, more than a hundred years old, started by people, farmers out in the prairie. Illinois Wesleyan had a professor in the middle part of the last century named John Wesley Powell, who took his students on a field trip into Arizona and just as a class project they were the first group to map the Grand Canyon. That is more than a hundred years ago. Mt. Powell, in Arizona, is named for this professor from this little college out in the prairie. In their charter, the original name of the school was Illinois Wesleyan Academy, but one of the founding trustees had scratched out in pen the word "academy" and written in "university". We laugh at that today but can you imagine the utter gall of a farm community in Illinois thinking it had some connection with higher education in Europe and Latin America? That stirs me deeply.

But I found on that charter the names of three persons who were familiar to me. One was named Rust, one was named Meharry and one was named Philander Smith. Those were three trustees on that board who had colleges named for them in the South which for a hundred years have served predominantly black communities. This network of church-related institutions around the country is worth saving if the network can find the missional tasks that were visible a hundred years ago and ought to be visible in our century today.

The third thing is that in this pluralistic environment we are running into some serious problems with which we are not prepared to cope. One of the most visible is the whole constitutional question of state and private support. The fact that thirty-four states have tuition support programs for church-related or private institutions and that this is being systematically challenged and will be heard by the Supreme Court this October is a momentous test of a tradition in American higher education, of church-state relations

that go back to the founding of Harvard College. But as Valerie said, in a time of conflict of norms, you dig your heels in and you use your rhetoric instead of the language of rational discourse in the resolution of problems, and you polarize, so that the Constitution is used to break institutions instead of supporting them.

This has had a very peculiar effect in the State of Maryland with one of the institutions related to my denomination which felt it had to drop out of the suit and left two or three of Jack Murphy's institutions (Roman Catholic) in the suit which will be heard by the Supreme Court. The plaintiffs who brought suit against these church-related colleges settled with Western Maryland College in an agreement which forced them to remove all religious symbols from the campus, to agree never to have prayers or religious songs in a baccalaureate service, and to redesign the faculty in philosophy and religion to make sure that there was a distributive representation of all religious traditions. This is not the separation of church and state. This is the destruction of an institution that has a history. I don't know how the Court will rule on this, but this is a constitutional problem of considerable moment with which we have to deal.

There is another constitutional problem: what are we going to do about public education? Should the church experiment with private, secondary education? Should new models be developed as alternatives for particular disaster areas in secondary education? And what does this do to the classical view of at least the Protestant community that the public school was the church school?

A fourth question, one that I would like to hear John Maguire discuss some day: are there theological reasons for staying in higher education? This to me is the most important question if church-related higher education continues to speak of its institutions as disposable. We are talking about an historical community that expresses itself in institutional ways, one of which is the school, and if we come to the point where these are disposable institutions, something very important in Christian history has been bent. Is there some connection between knowledge and belief, some visible sense in which a statement about God implies the necessity for education and particularly higher education? What would happen to the church in the United States if it gave up entirely on post-secondary education? There are people who think that that would be a good thing. I once knew a Bishop who used to say: "It takes us three years to get the student out of the seminary and then three years to get the seminary out of the student". It's that kind of a know-nothingness that is going to destroy the church as an institution that can survive in a pluralistic society.

I do not have the answers to these problems. I do know that we have in the United States various religious communities that are represented here, an enormously valuable social instrument that we do not understand, that we are allowing to dissipate without plan or strategy and if we lose it, we will never recover it. It reminds me of a metaphor: this system of universities and colleges is like a man who drove a Cadillac in the back streets of Paris full speed, backwards, looking out the rear view mirror. That is where we are with these institutions. I wrote an article recently: "One of our Colleges is Missing". I have to write a sequel that five of them are missing now and there will be ten next year. Is this a problem for us?

Response

Philip H. Phenix,
Professor of Philosophy and Education,
Teachers College,Columbia University

I would like to comment on some of the things that Tom has said. First, note that the question of parochial schools in the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and some other groups is part of the pluralistic question. That is, the commitment to parochial schools is a kind of commitment and the commitment has to be squared somehow with the sort of openness and pluralism that I think is at the root of the "civic covenant" that you spoke of, John, in relation to public institutions.

We need to think, too, about the theological underpinnings of the policy that should be followed in relation to education. For example, if we come back to the question of bilingualism, it seems to me that there is a theology of the word which underlines bilingual education. We tend to be caught in what I would describe as a nominalistic view of language, namely, that language is simply a label you put on things and it doesn't really make any difference whether it is a Spanish or an English label, so that one can make an exact translation from Spanish to English. As those of us who have studied Spanish know, however, in learning the language, one develops a whole new being. To say that there are people who are a-lingual is to imply that there are people who have no being. It seems to me that theologians, above all, should know that "in the beginning was the Word" and that somehow, being is rooted in the word. The word is an expression of being and when we fail to give the child a chance to understand the meaning of his existence in a language that is real to him as a total cultural entity, we are depriving him of his being. This is an example of the kind of theological reflection that could well be applied to the problem of bilingualism.

When Valerie talks about the forms and the value of commitments, she refers to ideology. We need a transcendent basis for our values, which allows our commitments to issue in something beside destructive conflict. Unless we have an over-arching or an under-girding transcendent unity, then there is no basis for having patience with one another while we work out these provisional relationships. When John talked about the mystery of pluralism, about there being more than one way of access to reality, he was getting close to a theological principle, even though he was urging a theology of universalism, and of personalism. When he asked the question, "What do we all have in common? What is the meaning of equality?", he was coming down to "What is Being Itself?" That's putting it in rather high sounding terms, but it is a theological question. When he asks "What is

excellence?", he is asking "What is the Good?", which Plato pointed out, theologically, is always beyond concrete expression and thus essentially transcendent. This is theological discourse.

When one discusses the revision of content and method in the scholarly disciplines, he is dealing with the kinds of conviviality which commit people and give form to their common enterprise. This has more in it than the positivistic decisions about what will provide the information we want; it gets down to ultimate reality. When Tom Trotter asks about the mission tasks of the church, when he refers to these people who have a sense of adventure and of vision, he is referring to the sense of transcendence in the people out in the hinterlands who believed in something beyond sight. He doesn't want that to be lost in a commonplace public policy which would turn everything into more money for building more dormitories on more public campuses.

I want to add one other dimension which didn't come into the discussion yet, although it was tangential to John's concern. For many years I have been interested in the epistemological problem in the various disciplines, and particularly in the problem of what it means to be a university. I have been struck by the paradox in the conflict between the necessity for being specialists -- historians, anthropologists, economists, physicists, and so on, who limit themselves deliberately to one particular way of looking at the world, to one mode of access to reality, but who do so for the sake of creating an organism which can function more efficiently. We all know that an organism requires specialization of function to be effective. The question is: how can we in our institutions of education, at one and the same time, help students to see the world through the eyes of these disciplines and also to have regard for the organic unity which the confluence of these specialized functions is supposed to serve?

I would like to see a kind of theological dialectic in the analysis of the pluralistic and monistic elements. The ancient problem of the one and the many is the issue here. We haven't talked much about the one, although whenever we talk about the many, we have to talk about the one because it isn't just many in the sense of separate entities. The question is: how can those separate entities somehow be one? What is the oneness that binds them together? Thus, a dialectic of the one and the many is necessary. Epistemologically, that means that when we talk about the study of disciplines in the universities and the existence of departments in the universities, at the same time we have to be asking: how are these separate specialties aware of the other specialties in such a way that they can cooperate

meaningfully with each other in the production of a common understanding of the world? In particular, may there not be theological, historical, and some philosophical disciplines, whose special task it is to articulate the mappings that are necessary in order to see the unity of the many?

Discussion with Panel Participants

Comment: I want to say something about bilingual education and the problems that it poses and at the same time the way it dramatizes the unwillingness on the part of the majority of the people in this country to be really pluralistic. We express ethnocentrism through the way we speak or relate to our languages. The French express their superiority by making you speak French when you're in their country. The Germans, by saying that their language is so difficult and complicated that they can learn your language before you can learn theirs, so they will speak to you in English, read in Spanish. But the Americans, a mostly English speaking people, express their linguistic superiority by forcing the rest of the people to learn their language. It seems to me that that's pretty much dramatized in the issue of bilingual education. We're always thinking about teaching Spanish speaking people in this country to speak English instead of also teaching the English speaking children to speak Spanish. There is some movement in this direction, but I don't see it really taking fire. I think that this is a denial of pluralism. There is that lack of being that was mentioned earlier.

I see the ugly face of the melting pot theory peering through pluralism, not through the comments that you've been making here, but through the way society in general seems to interpret pluralism. I think that we don't want to get back to the idea of E Pluribus Unum, but rather move in the direction of E Universitatis Potentium, that is power in diversity. But I don't think society sees it that way. I think society sees pluralism as another way of getting to E Pluribus Unum. And that scares me, because I see now some of the voices of advocacy of a few years ago willing to be voices now of conciliation or reconciliation. I think part of recognizing true pluralism is recognizing that some people are still at the advocacy level. For those of us who have made it, including myself, it's very easy to tell people that the revolution has to wait; we have to be pluralistic now. But I think that I and we all have to be careful that we do not reinforce the beliefs of the majority that pluralism is going back to the old status quo. How do we translate to the masses that we do not mean E Pluribus Unum, that we're not going back to the melting pot, that we really mean the recognizing of differences, allowing those differences and taking pride in them.

Comment: Another comment, to support this, having just come back from Mexico. I was exposed to the American enclave there of retired and wealthy Americans who've lived in Mexico for seven to fourteen years and refused to speak Spanish, but were very angry about the Cubans in Miami who are insisting on having Spanish spoken in the public schools. They refused to speak Spanish in a country that is Spanish speaking and now their biggest enemy is the Cubans in Florida. It was typical of the comment that was made.

Joseph Prewitt: I think the greatest failure of the American society has been the inability to dominate the Spanish speaking people in this country. The inability to colonize Puerto Rico by sending in troops of the church, all kinds of denominations, by sending in the military and by trying to change our whole educational system. We Spanish speaking people have refused, at this point we even refuse up here, to become part of the whole city. At times we re told that we are very hostile but we have resisted and we have a lot of people that are beginning to find a way in which they can deal with us in the sense of equality; to deal in a sense of common language, of being. I think you got the message very well that I was trying to say, what has in effect been going on in the school system in Hartford is that the whole process has been trying to negate our being. But it's sort of back-firing. And as you say with the Cubans, no way.

Comment: Mine will be in the nature of comments. I'm very concerned about the self-conscious approach to pluralism, which means that sometimes it' s rhetoric or divisiveness, or a false pluralism, or at best a skin graft that doesn't take. Speaking from personal experience, having been born and brought up in India, I too was forced, if I wanted to get a good education, to go into what was called an English institution. But that opened doors to me in terms of the rest of the world. We were not taught Indian history and Indian geography, but to this day I can draw you all the vegetation belts of Africa and Australia and every place else. However, through literature and art and so on, in school I learned facility in another language; I also learned about other cultures. But that was not just English-dominant or European-dominant because that was healthily counterbalanced by the family, and the society. So, one had a rootedness in oneself.

There's a saying about Indians, it's that Indians never discard, they just add on, which is what in a sense we learned to do. We found a rootedness in our own culture supported by pluralism in the family. In terms of age, I had a grandmother who spoke one language, another one who learned to speak different languages; our neighbors were Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, what have you, we celebrated each other's holidays and festivals, but we had a delicious rootedness in an acceptance and a glorying in that which was ours, but we added on to ours. I thought I knew all there was about pluralism, and about ecumenism. Then I came to this country and gave birth to a little girl. I was one step ahead in that I had learned to adjust, adapt and feel very much at home in two countries. When the child became three or four (her father was a Brahmin, I was a Christian; one of my parents converted to Christianity from being a Muslim, my father from being a Hindu. So we had no difficulty in terms of what the child's identity was going to be. We would give her a choice. He didn't want me to convert and I didn't expect him to convert), we

were wrestling tremendously with two kinds of identities for this child: A - she was born in this country of Indian parents; what does she consider to be her citizenship? B - How does she deal with this openness towards her religion? So one day she very naturally brought it up and we went through this very self conscious approach, and she said, Isn't that delicious, I have two of each! Now that was an experimental kind of pluralism that this child went through, which mercifully I went through in a different kind of way.

Then she started going to school. And when she was in school, one year they would study Latin America and another year they would study something else; a very well-intentioned approach to teaching a child about another culture. I looked at her textbook and I was horrified, because it was teaching about other cultures comparatively: "Aren't you lucky, little children over here, that you have enough to eat. How about those starving children in India." At which point I went into a lecture about all of this and realized that I would just have to take the child back home to India so that she could see that there are not just starving children in India, that there are starving children all over.

Then there was a teacher who had a very open-minded approach to global education. At least she thought she did. She taught not only out of the textbook, but she would teach them about the foods, and the songs and the dances, and I said, my God, all she's going to end up with is a whole bunch of fat children who can sing and dance. And I had that experience in committee meetings, in groups where people like ourselves get together. We are very well intentioned. We are the elite in terms of global awareness, of global approach to pluralism, but there is a tremendous difference between intent and implementation. Then you get caught in the democratic bag, which means the greatest good for all, and the thing gets very insipid, watered down, so that ultimately, we, the well-intentioned people, might end up again by creating a whole group of fat children who can sing and dance.

We have talked about pluralism, and though I know that's not the intent, unfortunately we end up centering on institutions, be they elementary, secondary, of higher education. I think that we have to find a way as Christians to concentrate on education in the society, which means more than just the education institutions. We have to dig into our own psyches, change our own attitudes and have a qualitative approach to pluralism and global consciousness. And if we succeed -- it's very difficult with private individuals, going to an elementary school and saying I don't like the curriculum and what have you, you just end up in an explosive situation, where there is a confrontation - but I think through our churches, through our adult educational schools, we should begin to attempt to educate ourselves, to educate our adults in churches, to begin to have an attitude of openness and listening, so that a child is the best teacher.

You can put children into a pluralistic school, put them into a pluralistic classroom, and keep your fingers crossed that they will have half-way open minded teachers, but the other part of it is an openmindedness from adults, their parents and others in the society so that we can begin to change an attitude in mind and heart towards this thing called pluralism.

You don't have to have the total gamut. Just through learning a language, as Mr. Phenix said, opens a door to a different kind of experience inside of your skin so that though you may learn Spanish, you will have an open-mindedness also towards German or Hindu or whatever. I hope some time in these two days some one will begin to deal with a philosophy and an attitude towards pluralism.

John Maguire: I would like to try to relate to the substance of several remarks by a couple of observations. One has to do with theology. Everybody is speaking autobiographically, and that itself is a theological reaffirmation; that is confessionalism. I remember vividly in the fifties that I did a dissertation based on the assertion that it was the responsibility of churches to do theology in a non-theological idiom. At the time I thought the idiom needed was psychological, that we had to relate to the movements in psychology, that we had to translate the classical Christian perspective into psychological terminology. By the sixties, like Tom Trotter, I felt that it had to be in terms of literary critical categories and imaginative literature. More recently I have come to feel that the idiom we had better learn to translate our perspective into is essentially political and economic. I do that because I think it gets us closer to a strategy for social change.

That leads me to the question of power. Increasingly I think that is what it is all about, opening up means by which new social arrangements are created in a redistribution of power. Not only the power of wealth, though that is fundamental - but also cultural redistribution and the like. That's what leads me to think that we have a fundamental problem in bilingualism or any kind of effort of this nature. It comes right down to resource allocation. We have a practical situation in our institution. We tried to run for three years a functionally bilingual university college, where everybody spoke at least two languages. It was observed by the state legislature that the consequence of that was reducing the range of courses that we could teach. We had to teach each course once in English and once in Spanish and in that way we could only offer half as many courses. That, then, drives you to some hard priority decisions. Maybe we don't need half as many courses over again in English. But maybe it is all right to teach a university curriculum that in regard to subjects and methods is quantitatively only half as ranging as one that was taught completely in English, but where more learning will take place in what appears to be a linguistically duplicated curriculum than a single language curriculum.

It is over such issues of resource allocation, how you choose to apply the dwindling resources that are available, that the real questions of higher education, are joined. And somehow the idiom that it seems to me religious people, and particularly Christian people, have now to operate in for the sake of their theological convictions is fundamentally political and economic. The people who control the purse strings must be made to recognize that what may seem like duplication or even triplication really is the requirement of world citizenship in the twenty-first century. So I was delighted to be spotted as a theologian who was speaking earlier today in Albany in a political-economic idiom, because of all the idioms (and it's an international and global one), I think those are the categories right now, politics and money; those are the principal ways in which people have to learn to speak and act in order to body forth the Christian vision.

Comment: Does not theology have its own idiom? Or are you saying that it always moves through the aesthetic, psychological or political-economic base? Like Kierkegaard, must you not come to theology in and of itself?

John Maguire: I don't know what that means any more. I had some primal images and I have some root metaphors and some identified experiences of people in groups. That's the raw material that I understand theology has always spun itself out of. As long as those images and root metaphors and shared experiences aren't lost, then I would not know what theology in its pristine form means because it would play right into the parochialism that I was just decrying in regard to standards in education.

Comment: I want it very obvious, what's become fairly critical to me at this point; that is, whether you talk about pluralism in various cultural forms or whether you now go over to this theological discussion period, I think there is some similarity in terms of the issue whether our pluralism or theology is going to be private or public. I think that in a sense, a lot of the people who are now trying to enforce a kind of public secularism are those who have been deprived in past generations of their language, their culture, their particularism as being valid for the public arena. And so the issue now is, since they've become a certain kind of public, are other groups, with their languages and cultures, going to be allowed to insert their particularism into the public arena, which I think we also call civic, or is that also going to have to remain private?

For example, the Swedes celebrate Santa Lucia services in church, but Swedish is not a very dominant factor in the public arena. That illustrates a discussion I had recently with a person who's very adamant about the subject. We don't want bilingual education, was this person's point. When we were kids we had to learn English. That whole pattern of attitudes

is only one or two generations away for a lot of people. And it's not only the Swedes, it's a lot of others, including the Italians in New York. They are struggling to maintain their culture. I think the question is going to come, whether pluralism is going to be pushed back into the private, or is it going to become part of the public and civic commitment? For example, is it going to be funded?

Comment: A very interesting phenomenon here, which I think John Maguire has illustrated, is the rationalistic trap in the whole matter of theologizing. Theology itself, I figure, is an attempt to do something impossible, that is, to say something about the ineffable. And what we have been talking about is essentially this; we are dealing with a whole level of things which are non-rational and this is where the power comes in. I think when we take a technological, problem-solving attitude toward problems of power, and reduce everything to rationalistic political systems, what we're really missing is what's underneath. And in talking about languages, to take a totally rationalistic attitude toward languages and I think Phil was getting at this, is missing the point. We are evoking symbols and the symbols are essentially ineffable. If you are going to talk about the mystery, that is where it is.

F. Thomas Trotter: The symbols are clashing too, though, Wes. At Pomona College is a marvelous gate, that says in stone 'Let only the eager, thoughtful and reverent enter here' over which someone had painted in red, "Viva la Rasa"!

Religion and the Future of America

Robert N. Bellah, Ford Professor of
Sociology and Comparative Studies,
The University of California in Berkeley

I want to discuss with you first some studies we have been conducting for the last four years on religious consciousness in the San Francisco Bay area, focused on youth religious groups, with a staff of graduate students doing participant observation in a number of groups and then with a sample survey of the entire Bay area. I want to communicate a few brief findings from the survey before going on to some more general issues. I might just begin by pointing out that we now have fifty or sixty years of survey research of some sort or other, not always terribly good and seldom completely comparable, on religion in America. That research shows, with important cyclical ups and downs, a steady decline of traditional religious belief and practice. The upturn of the early fifties was the most dramatic departure from that general picture and I think many of us have come to doubt the meaning of that particular shift in the curve. The picture of decline is so strongly confirmed from almost all work that has been done that some sociologists have gone so far as to predict the demise of religion in America.

One of the purposes of our study was to open up the range of questions beyond what most surveys of religion in America have asked. The usual sociological survey consists of a series of relatively simple-minded doctrinal questions: Do you believe in God? Do you believe Jesus Christ is the son of God? Do you believe in the virgin birth? Did you go to church this week, this month, this year? Those are the kinds of questions being used to define sociologically what religion is. It is religion defined in those terms which, by the evidence we have available, has been declining for half a century. Our research group developed an instrument that would ask some other kinds of questions. We kept some of the older questions so that we would have comparability with other work but we also asked questions like, have you ever had an experience of the sacred or holy? Have you ever had a religious experience in nature? How often do you meditate? - a series of questions opening up ranges of religious belief and practice beyond those of the most simple-minded version of traditional religion. We asked for people to give their religious identity. We got large numbers, of course, who would say they were Baptists or Methodists or whatnot. But we also asked people's knowledge of and attitudes toward a series

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of Oriental, Humanist and Neo-Christian groups so that we could get a sense of the impact of religious movements which are relatively new, at least relatively new in this country.

Of course, anything we found out must be qualified by the fact that we were working in the San Francisco Bay area, which is not typical of America. We know some of the ways in which it is atypical. It is high on liberalism, whether you define that politically, socially, or culturally relative to the rest of the country. The fact that three counties in the Bay Area went for McGovern in the last election, shows how different we are. On the other hand, many things culturally, socially, even religiously have started in the Bay Area and have generalized to other parts of the country. I need not remind you that it was at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964 that the first student revolt of the sixties began. We export things like that. The Hare Krishna movement began in San Francisco around 1970, and so on.

We also wanted to choose an area which was a breeding ground for experimentation because national samples of religion really are not picking up the small, but perhaps significant, growing edge of things. We thought that a more closely controlled study in an area of high experimentation might reveal things that otherwise might not come to our attention. For example, I think it is quite likely, if we had a statistically random sample of the Roman Empire in about 100 A. D., that we would not pick up the existence of Christianity. That would have been a rather serious error. We also skewed our sample so that we over-sampled for young people; again, on the same grounds that experimentation is apt to be higher in the under-thirty group.

In terms of the general features of the sixty year trend that I spoke of earlier, our sample quite predictably shows that we are further along in that same spectrum. Of those that claim any kind of traditional religious identity, seventy-five per cent of our sample over thirty, but only fifty per cent under thirty in the San Francisco Bay area identify with any traditional religious group. Recent national samples, however, show that about seventy-five per cent of people under thirty still have that identification. So we are clearly further along on that spectrum. This is not just a California phenomenon, because when we ask about parents, we find that about 85% of mothers and 75% of fathers of our under-thirties are reported as having been traditionally religious.

Yet, when we begin to look at other data, at the kinds of things that most sociological surveys have not been asking, we have to modify any conclusion that religion as such is declining. We find widespread interest in and attraction to Oriental religions. I will have a bit more to say about that later. We found an interest in a whole range of religious or pseudo-religious or proto-religious kinds of things; for example, strong interest in spiritualism and astrology. We found ninety-eight percent of people under thirty know their astrological sign, eighty-six percent over thirty, and we found significant percentages, ranging around fifty percent, of people who are strongly concerned with and interested in astrology. We found belief in ESP: ninety-one percent of youth, and eighty-seven percent over thirty. Belief in ESP is stronger than belief in God. Furthermore, more than fifty percent of our sample report actual experiences in ESP. This is not just an abstract belief, they think that they have actually experienced it.

When we asked questions like, do you spend time thinking about certain kinds of things: the problem of suffering, the existence of God, whether life has any meaning, we found high percentages, over seventy percent across the sample, who not only say that they spend time thinking about such questions, but they spend as much or more time thinking about things like that than about political or economic questions. When we asked about religious experience, we found that of those reporting a contact with something holy or sacred, over fifty percent of youth had had such an experience, somewhat under fifty percent of older people, and about half of those who reported such an experience report having been profoundly changed by that experience. Some of you may have seen Andrew Greeley's national survey, which he reported under the catchy title of "A Nation of Mystics", where, again, he found extraordinarily high percentages of profound religious experience reported by a general sample of the population. Deeply moving experiences of nature are reported by eighty percent of our sample.

In short, by many measures, religion in some general sense is still quite salient. It is the traditional forms that seem to be declining rather than concern for the area of religion as such. Since there is no particular reason to believe that in earlier periods historically everyone was a zealous believer, what we may be seeing is not the decline of religion in any sense, but only the decline of external conformity. It was socially important fifty years ago to appear to be a religious person traditionally defined; now there is permissiveness for people to go their own way on that issue. The problem of hypocrites in the church is as old as the church itself. What we may be seeing is simply a shift of former hypocrites out of the church, rather than anything we could call, even in the Christian community, a basic decline.

Of course, the question of decline immediately raises the question of the criteria of measurement. We do find a significant percentage, though a relatively small one, of people who cannot be defined as religious in any terms whatsoever. We don't have adequate data to know whether that group is growing significantly. It accounts for about eleven percent of our sample, but it is not a major element and it is very hard for us to describe that group very well. It does have certain features that come out when aggregated statistically which I will report in a minute, but we do not really know what those people are like and where they come from.

Rather than going further with these discreet questions, I would like to quickly lump together some sub-categories in our sample to show you how they behave in a fairly orderly way across a series of questions. I think this tells us something about the role of religion in American society, at least in the present and possibly in the future.

We broke our sample down into four sub-categories. The first we defined as conventionally religious. The criteria here were that they identify with some traditional denomination; they have a strong belief in life after death; they attend church or synagogue at least once a week. These are people who meet the traditional standard of belief and practice. The opposite group is also easy to define. They do not identify with any traditional group; they report themselves as agnostic or atheist; they do not believe in life after death. Another category, which we call alternatively religious, report various kinds of religious belief and practices, but they are not the traditional biblical ones. Finally, there is a residual category, which we call nominally religious, for which the pattern is: they do believe, at least they have some belief, for instance, that there is life after death; they do identify with a traditional denomination, but they go to church seldom, if ever. Aggregating these groups, we find the following statistical percentages: Conventional religious - 33%; nominal religious - 43%; non-religious - 11%; alternatively religious - 8%. That last group is, I think, under represented, because we know from other parts of our study that a much larger group than 8% are interested in and attracted to that question. The church, in some sense, remains invisible. All we can do is tell you about relatively measurable criteria, and we do not claim anything more than that.

These four categories do vary quite systematically, and it is that which makes it interesting to distinguish them. For instance, on the religious interest questions about the meaning of life and so on, we find the conventionally religious and the alternatively religious relatively high, whereas the nominally religious and the non-religious are relatively low. But, interestingly enough, even among the non-religious, we find

strong minorities who are concerned with these questions; even for atheists and agnostics, the religious question is not wholly missing in their lives. When we look at attitudes toward traditional personal morality, we find striking variations among these groups. For instance, when we ask, do you disapprove of unmarried couples living together? 60% of conventionally religious disapprove; 29% nominally religious, 18% non-religious; 7% alternatively religious. Do you disapprove of more freedom for homosexuals? 61% of conventionally religious disapprove; 40% nominal; 23% non-religious; 14% alternatively religious. And so on across a series of old lifestyle kinds of questions, we find the high among the conventionally religious, the low among the alternatively religious.

On the other hand, when we ask a series of new lifestyle questions, questions like, do you believe it is important to live close to nature? Do you think it is important to be aware of your own body? Do you spend a good deal of time getting to know yourself? We find the opposite pattern: conventional religious people are low on those questions; alternatively religious people are high; nominal and non-religious people are in the middle. This pattern is also clearly represented in political orientations: When we ask people, do you identify yourself as a liberal or left of liberal? We find conventionally religious at 13%; nominally religious at 22%; non-religious at 40%; alternatively religious at 56%. A series of questions about toleration of Communists whether you think the police should be brought under control, whether marijuana should be legalized, show the same pattern. On one question, however, we find the conventionally religious and alternatively religious people together, in contrast to the non-and nominal religious, and this is, is material comfort an important part of your life? For conventionally religious and alternatively religious people, material comfort is relatively less important than for nominally and non-religious people.

I would like to move on to some more general questions that I raised in my New Republic article last November. I spoke there of two strands in the old American culture, which I think have been engaged in a struggle for the American soul, although for a long time the profound contradiction between them has been patched over, so that we haven't seen how fundamentally incompatible they are. I spoke of two different fundamental conceptions of society and personal values. One of these, which I would identify with the Biblical strand of American culture, views society as a positive good, a community in which we are all members, one with another, all responsible for the good of each. The individual in such a society is to grow in truth, contribute to the common good, and seek that good which transcends both self and society.

The other strand, which I call the utilitarian, views society as purely instrumental to the individual self-interest and advancement. Society has no positive moral meaning, but is to serve only as a neutral arbiter to protect individual interests from infringement. Society's most important function is to police, to protect private property. Freedom in the Biblical tradition means freedom from the bondage of sin, freedom to do the good. One is most free when the Holy Spirit is active within one, so that one is spontaneously obedient to divine will. That freedom is expressed in love of one's fellow human beings. Freedom in the utilitarian tradition means freedom from restraint, freedom to pursue one's own interests with the minimum possible social interference. How a word as central as freedom could paper over such a profound hiatus in meaning, is a problem in looking at American history. The contrast can be illustrated from any period of American history. I tried to do some of that in The Broken Covenant.

Recently I came across a current example which struck me so vividly that I have to share it with you. A recent text which won a National Book Award prize is Robert Nozick's Anarchy, State and Utopia. Peter Singer has summarized at least part of the argument as follows: "Nozick's position sounds severe, and so it is," (Nozick, by the way, is a professor of philosophy at Harvard). "According to Nozick, we have no obligation to help those worse off than we are. If a starving man drags himself to our house, where we are entertaining our friends with a sumptuous banquet, we are perfectly within our rights in sending him away without a crust. In mitigation though, it is important to remember that Nozick has nothing against voluntary donations from the rich to the poor. The rich are within their rights to keep everything they have and to throw what they cannot use down the sewer. But, of course, if they wish to give some of it away, then the State should not interfere." I cannot help but remember in contrast to those words, the great words of John Winthrop, which I quote extensively in the first chapter of The Broken Covenant, "We must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection and we must be willing to abridge ourselves in our superfluities for the supply of other's necessities. We must delight in each other, make other's conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body." Winthrop, I think, would not have recognized Mr. Nozick's right to turn the starving from the door while we throw what we cannot use down the sewer.

This view of man, society and the cosmos, which is stated in almost caricature form by this distinguished Harvard philosopher, is not simply an idea floating in the blue. It is tied up with certain structural features of American society that I point to in the article and in the book, and which have grown stronger in the last hundred years: features of our economy, features of our society. In turning to the present state of American society, I think we can make a diagnosis. As far as I am concerned, there is one word which adequately characterizes the problem. America is suffering from a certain form of technological and industrial growth under the aegis of a capitalistic economic system which can be called, I think, cancer. I do not know if it is a terminal case. But it continues every day to tear the life out of genuine interpersonal and genuine social relations throughout our society from top to bottom.

The problem is a very general one, but at one level it is most obviously stated as an economic problem. There are many problems that have been pointed out to us by those who have spoken in terms of the theology of liberation. There are many problems about the structure of contemporary industrial capitalism which involve enormous inequalities of income and wealth, which involve the dominance of the managerial elite, whatever the technically democratic features of the society may be, and these peoblems are, of course, extremely serious and deserve our great concern and attention. But the biggest problem, it seems to me, is capitalism's insatiable need to grow. If we can use another metaphor, capitalism is an addiction: the more you shoot, the more you need to shoot. The whole system is geared to a continuous acceleration. There seems to be no way to stop it. There is an inexorable drive towards centralization (I'll get into the political side in a minute) and an inexorable drive toward expansion, which includes the export of capitalism to the rest of the world. Capitalism has a drive towards an imperialist economic penetration of the rest of the world. The system is such that it moves with a sort of leaderless momentum. Radical students often think of capitalism as a kind of conspiracy; there are a few people directing it all. If it were so, it might be more rational than I think it is. Watergate revealed to us the pettiness and ineptness of the conspirators, but the conspirators were not in control. They were all servants of the insatiable beast, and no one is in control. The managers of the capitalist economy are like little boys dancing around an elephant pricking its heels as it wanders on its inexorable way. That way, as many have pointed out, is leading to ecological disaster in the relatively foreseeable future and I think it is leading to social, political and economic disaster much sooner.

In very close conjunction with this pattern of relentless economic expansion is a growth of central government. They go hand in hand, in spite of the standard Republican rhetoric, which is against big government. In fact, the growth of capitalism and the growth of centralized, bureaucratic government are absolutely and inexorably related. As we can see in the instances of large corporate structures which get in trouble, they immediately turn to government for help. Here again, though we have an enormous increase in central government, this has not produced intelligent planning. The government is so inept at planning that involves any long time span or involves any real sacrifices from any significant portion of the population, that it is forced consistently to lie about the reality of our situation. So, problems that were foreseeable fifteen years ago about energy were deliberately not faced, because nobody could take the rap for making the decision which had to be made. So bureaucracy, like capitalism, is an essentially leaderless momentum, responding only to the most immediate and short term pressures, and the most effective of those pressures always come from corporate capitalism.

If we turn to the area of culture too, we come to the same diagnosis of cancer, of leaderless growth, without control. Most obviously, mass culture continues to grow at the expense of participatory culture. Along with the other apparently insatiably expanding needs in our society, there is an ever expanding need for illusion, for the images that feed illusion. Television and professional sports provide many of the fundamental images of our lives, and therefore directly compete with what religion traditionally did in our society. The images that Americans had in their heads a hundred years ago were much more apt to be drawn from the Bible. Today they are drawn from television. There is a more immediate competition there perhaps than we often think. Some of this growth is itself a direct consequence of the commercialization of culture. The tendency of capitalism is to turn everything into a commodity, to sell it and to push it and to make its only aim commercial gain.

But there are other features of our society, of its technical rationality, which are part of this tendency but which cannot so immediately be tied to commercialization. I would like to lay them out very briefly as a context for our discussion, though we are touching on enormous problems very swiftly. The growth of specialized knowledge in our great universities and research institutes at the same time that there is a decline in the great integrating visions; this is one development. Philosophy has become language critique. Theology is in confusion and disarray, while the professional journals spew forth ever more technical knowledge. Knowledge grows geometrically, while meaning and coherence collapse. This is very much the problem of the institution that I work in, the university, where there is almost an agnostic refusal even to discuss the questions of meaning.

We can only talk about our immediate technical specialty. Whatever may have been true earlier, I think the rise in the cultural sphere of this mass commercial culture, what Gary Snyder at a meeting I attended a couple of weeks ago called the Monoculture, and the proliferation of knowledge at the expense of meaning are the chief threats to cultural pluralism today.

We always think in the images that were most apt, perhaps, a generation or two ago. There was a period where cultural diversity was primarily threatened by the drive of white Protestants to homogenize everybody into carbon copies of themselves, where the demand was for 100% Americans, for non-hyphenated Americans, which was traumatic and cruel and certainly must be rejected in our present situation. But I just don't think that is where the danger comes from now. It comes much more from a monoculture which invades all our lives, which undermines every one of our cultural traditions, which is as much a threat to any genuine cultural integrity of white Protestants as it is to anyone else. It is a mass culture, whose producers are themselves thoroughly non-denominational. It seems to me that if we want to talk about cultural pluralism and diversity, somehow or other, this is the problem which is the most severe.

How do we cope with social trends that seem to be too powerful for any group, priviledged or deprived, to deal with? If uncontrolled growth is the problem, what are the strategies for dealing with it? It seems to me that there are three main strategies being offered at the moment, and although proponents of these different strategies often view them as incompatible, I will try to argue that they are not necessarily incompatible. The first is a very old American solution. It says, straighten out your own head, to use a current form of language, find a group of like-minded people and actually begin to live a better life, a life which contrasts with the life of the general society around you. This new life which you create out of your own will and cooperation with a small group of others with whom you are in face to face interaction, may be a rural commune; it may be a Pentacostal house-church; it may be something like Snyder's community near Nevada City in the Sierras; it may be a racial or ethnic self-help group like the Black Panthers in Oakland in their present form, who are very much concerned with community service and who have basically rejected violence as a technique for meeting their needs. This solution is, I think, an attractive one to all those who feel the intense pressure to maintain diversity, pluralism, community. I don't know how many of you have seen the article by Bill Greenbaum on pluralism in the Harvard Education Review for last August, 1974; that article is very much down this line. We must nurture the possibility of different communities taking their lives in their own hands, maintaining their differentness, if they

want to maintain their differentness, and very often perhaps providing a higher norm of ethical and social life than the general society is able to provide. This position is profoundly distrustful of centralized bureaucracy.

The second strategy says, essentially, the system as we have it can be humanized. Modern society is too complex for all of us to go back to Walden Pond and live by our own bootstraps. Bureaucracy is not necessarily an inherent evil. It's what you do with it, and it is possible to make significant and striking changes towards amelioration, with only modest changes in the present system. Even this Congress could make a significant beginning. A decent administration could make remarkable progress. It is possible with relatively simple legislation, for example, to put a floor beneath which no one in the society could sink in terms of basic economic security, health, education and so forth. Indeed, we see other advanced, capitalist industrial societies like Sweden, Austria and England, which do provide a level of support, which we, though very rich, have never chosen to provide. People who take this second position are often critical of those opting for the first solution, saying the local community can be very repressive, very exclusive and very destructive. There are times when central power has to counterbalance local power or no significant change will be made.

The third strategy is concerned with the fundamental economic problems that I spoke of when I began my diagnosis of our ills. It calls for radical, structural change. It is by implication skeptical of both the first two strategies for not going to the real heart of the problem. It would tend to say that only democratic socialism will stop the cancer, and that it will take almost a revolution to bring that to America.

I would argue that all three of these strategies are necessary and valuable and that we do not have to choose ultimately between them, although individuals may well opt for one rather than another. Indeed, I am reasonably convinced that only a balance of all three has any possible chance of getting us through the very dark years which I see ahead. I believe firmly in the importance of the witness community, that shows in its own life that there are other alternatives. It is also important in showing that changed lives accompany changed institutions. The great danger of the second alternative, that you can make the system work better, is to imagine that just a little technical, bureaucratic tinkering can change things. We know that change requires more than changes in the rules. It requires changed lives, changed hope, changed possibilities for individual human beings. Such witness communities help to generate the spiritual power that will be necessary for all the other kinds of changes.

But I would also argue that humanizing the system is a valid task. It provides the space for people to live and to work on the deeper problems. The structure of legal freedom is, especially crucial. Indeed, if the Constitution were really enforced, I think we would already have democratic socialism. We could not effectively guarantee our citizens equal protection under the law without it. What is the meaning of equal protection of the law if you are poor and a minority person? We know how hollow that fundamental constitutional guarantee is in an economic system like ours.

I think we cannot dodge the question of fundamental structural change, chiefly because the course on which our economy is set will overthrow our republic if we do not control it. Rather than thinking, as some of my colleagues do who have been enormously heartened by the Nixon episode, that "the system is strong", to me the Nixon episode is only the opening, the bare curtain raiser on the possibilities that lie ahead. The drive to undermine our free institutions comes from the enormous concentration of corporate power in private hands. I believe that the structural changes in the economy that are needed can be called radical in the best sense of the word, that is, they go to the roots of our problem. But I would also argue that such change is conservative in the best sense of that term. Capitalism is becoming inimical to the preservation of our democratic institutions. I believe that only democratic socialism will conserve some recognizable continuity with the best of our own past.

I would like to turn in conclusion to a brief application of these strategies for dealing with our present religious community in America in its great diversity and complexity. I believe that religious participation in every one of these levels is crucial, if there is any chance for success at all.

There is a clear affinity between the first strategy, the alternative community, the witness community, and the long tradition of sectarianism in Christianity. We all know the dangers of the closed sect that turns its back on the world and is only concerned with the salvation of a few souls. We can see that at present in various kinds of alternative communities. But the witnessing sect, which stands before the world as a model and as an example which calls the world to judgement, is an indelible strand of Christianity going right back to the New Testament, and it seems to me that it still has a vital role today. Baptists, Quakers, Brethren, Mennonites, and other communities may have gone rather far away from their basic sectarian beginnings, but there is a relationship to this model in some of their modern offshoots like the Christian World Liberation Front, which is the Jesus movement in Berkeley. This is a rather interesting group, with strong social conscience and not given to approval of the political powers-that-be; it is a genuine offshoot of the sectarian tradition. I think that there is a real stirring in the evangelical movement. By no

means everyone who considers himself conservative and evangelical theologically these days is totally sold on the American social system. We may see some very remarkable outpourings of strength for alternative visions of America in places where some of us with a liberal church background would least have expected it.

I also think, however, that the role of the church, and here I think of the church in the classical sense as a contrasting form to the sect, is essential in our present time and I would link it especially to the second strategy, to the necessity to humanize the system, or to press for humanization of the system. The church in its history is precisely the church because it has accepted society in a way in which the sects never have. It has accepted the reality of power, the reality of violence. It has tried to control power and violence for the sake of the common good. It has often ended up only baptizing the established status quo, but when the church is effective, it maintains a certain leverage. It stands closer to power, and because it is close to power, it can effect an influence in a humanizing direction. I think many people in America today, even those who live and operate in religious bodies which are not churches in this classical sense, have forgotten that role and that meaning of the church. Many in the liberal churches, I think, are primarily sectarian or radical in their orientation, and attempt to make the church where they find themselves into a form which is a basic sociological contradiction to its own history and its own structure. Our statistics would certainly tend to indicate that the ordinary members of the traditional denominations in America are fundamentally centrist or conservative in their attitudes towards the society, indeed, more so than any other group in the society. We have to start from where we are. We have to start from what is a realistic possibility and use precisely the closeness of the traditional churches to the center of society as a point of beginning, rather than to deny the reality of their actual structures and communities.

My model for fundamental change is basically an American mode. (We are moving to the third strategy, radical structural change). Here the form that I see as crucial is the social movement, as we saw it with the abolitionists, with the Populists, with the Old Socialist party before World War I and with the early Civil Rights movement under Martin Luther King. Such movements in America always have a powerful religious input and I would expect a movement for fundamental change in American economic institutions to have an important element of religious leadership. I think it would not only involve the great Biblical communions, but also those coming out of a non-western and Native American religious context, who have things to say about the needed changes in the structure of our society. Such a movement would articulate itself, I think, in the traditional form of a voluntary movement, drawing from the churches, drawing from the parties, but neither a political party

nor a church. It is precisely that kind of movement which can generate the pressure to bring about structural change. I would insist on the model of the social movement because I think that is the only way that fundamental social change ever occurs in America. I insist on the religious dimension because I think such a movement can change consciousness as well as institutions, that involvement in such a movement changes the way people see the world, changes their feelings about interpersonal relations and helps to create the people who could make a more humane society work. If I am right in my diagnosis of American society, that it is profoundly corrupt and that it profoundly corrupts the people that live in it, why would we believe that by simply changing institutions and then putting the same corrupt people in them we would be better off? So to me, only a movement which both changes people and changes institutions has any chance of creating a better society.

I also insist on the religious dimension for another reason: because there is more to human existence than economics or politics or even culture. There is no locomotive of history that guarantees that we will be successful. We may be defeated in our effort to overcome our problems and that defeat may be catastrophic. Only a relation to that which defies all definition can sustain us in that kind of situation.

I do not at all wish to imply that the churches would not have an important interest in and concern for such a social movement for fundamental change in America. As I said before, I think that many of the leaders of such a movement would come from the churches. But I do not think that the church as an institution itself can or should become that movement. It would only destroy its own institutional strength if it tries to do what its basic form is not designed to do. But the churches can sustain an atmosphere in which such a movement might have some chance for success.

Those of you who know my work know that I am not terribly sanguine. In terms of the three alternatives that I discussed in the New Republic article, I argued that the third one, fundamental change in a humane direction, was probably the least likely, but Christian hope has never been based on statistical probabilities. If we can sustain a relation of obedience to God, then we can face even the possibility of disastrous defeat in this work with ultimate confidence.

Discussion with Mr. Bellah

Question: What is the role of education in all this?

Answer: I have recently published, first in abbreviated form in the Fall issue of Daedalus and then in a pamphlet, a piece on new religious consciousness and the secular university, which is relatively pessimistic. It follows lines that I have alluded to here, that the nature of the secular university is not fundamentally set up to meet a need which is extraordinarily salient, precisely among the group of people who come to the university. We know from cross-cultural and psychological studies that people in late adolescence and early adulthood are in the period when they are looking for coherent meaning in the world. They want to find themselves, they want to find some kind of reality they can trust. By and large, the American university today is totally unequipped to deal with that need. The old denominational college was much more closely geared to it. Today we may view as corny that emphasis on building the total character, on creating a new person through education, that had a resonance with the human condition of people of college age, which the multiversity, which just purveys techniques that you can use instrumentally to get ahead in the world, just cannot do.

I do have a small grain of hope in some of the departments of religion which in various places seem to be the last place in the university where you can still ask the big questions. If you ask the big questions in the philosophy department today, they laugh, who cares about them? That's not what they are doing. And I am afraid there are some religion departments like that too. They just want to work on the footnotes to the proper translation of certain texts. But there are a few places where those questions are being asked, and of course, there are always individual teachers who rise above the limitations of their disciplines to speak to these deeper problems. But the university as a cultural area, because it is more open than lots of places in America, may contribute, has contributed and I am sure will continue to contribute ideas for improving our society. I do not think the established structure of universities is very well equipped to do that.

Question: What about the schools?

Answer: They are in worse shape. In all the cultural upheavals, the loss of self-confidence in the Anglo population, the loss of a sense of basic legitimacy in our whole institutional system has hit the public school system perhaps worse than any other part of the society. There have been some

notable efforts to create experimental forms, many of which have been very creative and positive. But by and large I think the public educational system is reeling, not only because of deep doubts as to what it's about, what it stands for, how it can possibly answer all the tremendous problems that have been raised in the last generation, but right now because the society seems to feel that education is no longer worth spending money on. In the State of California, there are many districts which are on the literal verge of bankruptcy, that cannot meet minimal needs. Some reordering of priorities about the importance of education has to come. But we cannot expect the public schools to do what nobody else can do. That seems to be what we have done too much of, expected the public schools to solve the race problem, the class problem, the economic problem. Obviously the public schools cannot. We need much more profound structural change in the real centers of power and to think that tinkering with the public schools is going to change everything in society is just crazy.

Question: You spoke quite positively about the Eastern religious groups. One observation that has been made about these groups is that they have an "escapist" motive. On the other hand, it is a characteristic of every one of the options, that if it is to be a force for social change, it requires deep engagement with the world. How do you square your hopefulness for Eastern religious groups which have a strong escapist tendency with your prescription for engagement?

Answer: I tried to point out that this is an inherent danger in the sectarian model. I think they do fall into that, potentially. It is a powerful model when it stays in close touch with the world as a religious community. When it turns its back on the world and just tries to save its own small group, then I agree, it does not have anything to contribute. But I am polemicizing against over-quick reactions, especially from moralizing Protestants who think that anybody who is not engaged in direct, immediate, tangible, pragmatic action in the world is somehow making no contribution at all. I frankly believe that if we are to get out of the mess that we are in, we need the contemplative life also. We need meditation, we need prayer, we need all of the classical strengths religion has in the past provided, in some kind of dialectic balance, of course, with realistic action in the world.